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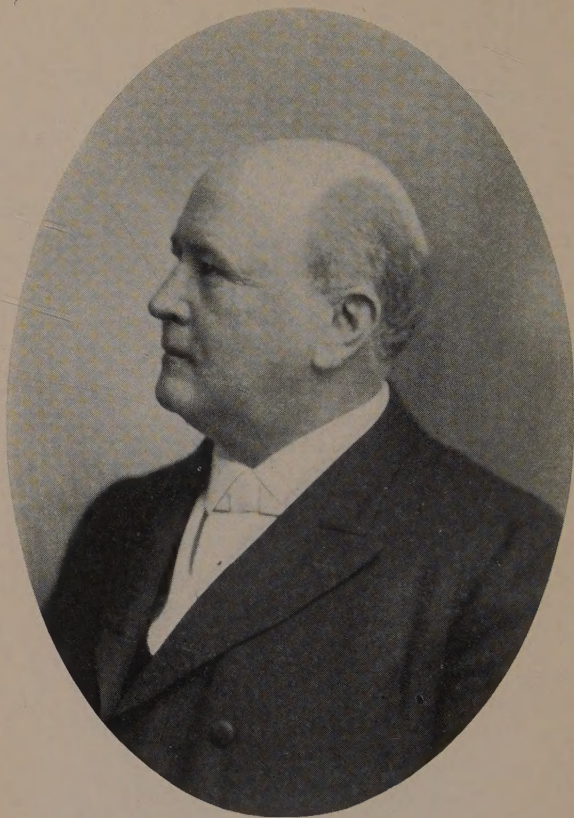


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The Methodist Pulpit

The Changeless Christ



Robert Forbes

The Changeless Christ

AND OTHER SERMONS

By

REV. ROBERT FORBES, D. D.

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I.

THE CHANGELESS CHRIST.

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever."—HEB. XIII, 8.

CHANGE seems to be written upon everything. Every particle of matter is undergoing a chemical change; slow it may be, but sure. Every particle of matter is in motion. The particles in a steel bar are actually in motion. The worlds are in motion. This world is at a point in space now where it never was before, and where it will never be again in all the eternal years. The surface of the earth is changing. In some places the land encroaches upon the sea; in others, the sea encroaches upon the land. Mountains rise where once the ocean rolled, and the ocean rolls its waves where once a continent stood. Cities rise where once there was only an Indian wigwam. Railroad trains are run where once there was only the Indian trail. Change is everywhere.

Our theories are changing. The text-books that we read on scientific subjects when we were boys are laid upon the shelf, and a generation will yet arise who will laugh at some of the profoundest teachings of to-day. It is not safe to give your opinion upon a scientific question unless you have read the morning paper.

Forms of government are changing. There was first the patriarchal, and the father ruled his family. Then two patriarchs united their forces and established the tribal form of government. After a time the head of the tribe degenerated into a king, and thus the absolute monarchy was established. Time passed on, and the intelligence of the people demanded that the power of the king should be limited. Hence arose the constitutional form of government, or limited monarchy. Then it dawned upon the most intelligent people on earth that perhaps we could dispense with the services of the king entirely, and there arose the republic. We are testing the experiment now in this country whether a people are indeed capable of self-government. It has not been sufficiently tested yet. It requires a long time to establish the success of so large an experiment. American manhood has arisen equal to every emergency thus far in our history, and we

assume it will arise equal to every demand of the future, and that the stability of the republic will be demonstrated; but it is a long distance from the patriarchal form of government to the republican.

Many changes have been wrought, great changes have taken place in our theological thinking. The cold, severe, harsh, heartless type of theology of the long ago has disappeared, and the beautiful truths of the New Testament give color to our theological thought to-day. The infinite despot that once ruled the universe has abdicated. The Infinite Father has taken his place. The skies weep in pity over man in his sin and sorrow. The theology of to-day is very different from the theology of one hundred or two hundred years ago. It has changed for the better, and is approaching the truth as Jesus taught it.

We are changing. We are what we were not, and we shall be what we are not now. See that aged man upon whose shoulders rests the weight of eighty years. It is not strange that his shoulders stoop, that his eyes have grown dim, that his natural strength has somewhat abated, and that his right hand has lost its cunning. The struggle of the years has left its mark upon him. Once he was a child nestling in his mother's bosom; then a sturdy school-

boy, playing on the green before his mother's door; then a young man full of pride and power and ambition, daring the world to do its worst, eager for the fray; then in middle life, when he had that strange mingling of experience and strength that made him almost invincible on any field of conflict; and now at last an old man. What changes have been wrought in him through the eighty years that have passed!

Our friends are changing. The friends that greet us now are, with few exceptions, not the friends of other days.

“When I remember all
The friends so linked together,
I've seen around me fall
Like leaves in wintry weather,
I feel like one
Who treads alone
Some banquet hall deserted,
Whose lights are fled,
Whose garlands dead,
And all but he departed.
Thus often in the stilly night,
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Fond memory brings the light
Of other days around me.”

Some things, relatively, do not change. We speak of the everlasting hills. They are not everlasting, but they last longer than some other things. Hence we call them everlasting, but they are wearing out. The frost of winter, the sun of summer, and the rain of spring and autumn days are wearing out the mountains, and the valleys are fertile at their expense.

The corn tassel shakes in the breeze, and the grass grows green, and flowers bloom in the fertile valley at the expense of the mountains, which are constantly being impoverished that the valleys may be enriched.

We are most interested in those things which remain without change, as some things relatively do so remain. We love the old friends the best. We "grapple them to our soul with hooks of steel." We love the old scenery the best. The new has its attraction, but the old has a charm all its own.

"How dear to this heart are the scenes of my childhood,
When fond recollection presents them to view!
The orchard, the meadow, the deep-tangled wildwood,
And every loved spot that my infancy knew!"

If you should revisit the home of your youth;
if the old tree stands there across the way,—that

old tree under whose branches you used to stretch your weary limbs after a day of toil or a day of play, or in whose branches you used to swing with boyish glee,—that tree would have more charm for you than a thousand orchard trees in bloom, that have been planted since the days when you were young.

If the home of your childhood still stands, the house in which you were born, you remember

“The little window where the sun
Came peeping in at morn;—
It never came a wink too soon,
Nor brought too long a day.”

That house, humble in its appearance, the joyous home of your childhood, would have a greater attraction for you than a splendid mansion that may have been erected by a millionaire, since the day you said good-bye to mother in the long ago.

With these general thoughts in mind,—first the changeableness of everything; second, some things relatively, do not change; and, third, we are most interested in the things that remain unchangeable,—hear again the words of the text: “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever.”

1. Who is Jesus Christ? I answer, I can not

tell you. Words at the best are only pictures of thoughts, and not always good pictures. One of the blunders of religious teachers has been that they have undertaken to define the undefinable. The best things we have do not readily submit to definition. What is beauty? We have felt its charm and recognized its influence upon us, but who will dare undertake to define it?

What is poetry? We recognize poetry when we read it, but who shall furnish a definition?

“Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes;
Flow gently, I’ll sing thee a song in thy praise.
My Mary’s asleep by thy murmuring stream;
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.”

We all know that this is poetry, one of the Ayrshire plowman’s sweetest songs; but who will define what poetry is?

What is home? We know its joy, we share its bliss, we would bravely die in its defense; but what is home? We disinterred the bones of a man in a foreign land, and brought them home for burial in American soil because he once sang for us a few stanzas on “Home, Sweet Home.” Yet we all know that there is more in home than John Howard Payne put into his poetry.

What is genius? It baffles our analysis and defies our attempt to explain it. Who was Abraham Lincoln? Many biographies have been written, but the biographer of Abraham Lincoln will write the story of that wonderful life a hundred years from now. We rise from the reading of any of the present biographies of Lincoln with the feeling that there is much that has not been said; that splendid man from the Sangamon bottoms, who came to the White House and broke the shackles off the slaves and made them free, is too large for our analysis, too great for our definitions.

2. Who was Jesus Christ? He is infinitely beyond our comprehension. One says He was only a man. Omit the "only." It was great to be a man. It is no small matter to be a man. God made man in His own likeness. You and I have never seen a man. We have seen wrecks of manhood partially reconstructed, but a man we have never seen. This Man was so tender that He took little children in His arms and blessed them; so brave that He went to His cross without a murmur; so wise that one of His sermons has kept the preachers busy for twenty centuries; so sympathetic that He wept with the bereaved sisters of Bethany; so strong that He uttered words that made monarchs tremble in their

•

capitals; and so gentle and forgiving that He said to the woman charged with a crime, "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more." A man like this the world has never seen but once.

One says He was human, yet divine. Better say human, therefore divine. The divine does not exclude the human, nor does the human exclude the divine. The perfectly human is divine, for man was made in God's image; and the perfectly divine can find no better revelation to us than in the human. He was divine, therefore human; perfectly human, therefore divine.

We limit God by our limitations. He can reveal truth to us no faster and no further than we are capable of receiving it, and only in such a manner as we are capable of understanding it. He always reveals truth to men by incarnating it. He gave the truths of electricity to Franklin, Morse, Field, and Edison. He did not zigzag it on the sky with the lightnings, but put these truths into the souls of these illustrious men, and they wrote them out for us.

God gave the truths of poetry to the world, not by writing them on the sky with an angel's finger, but by incarnating them in the souls of Shakespeare, Burns, Moore, Byron, Scott, Whittier, Longfellow,

Bryant, and others of earth's illustrious sons and daughters, who

"Walk the hills where muses haunt,
Where the gods and men hold fellowship."

They write them down for us, and we read them by our parlor fires for our girls and boys.

The truths of statesmanship were not written by an angel's hand on a scroll and thrown down to earth. They were put into the soul of an Alfred, a Cromwell, a Washington, a Lincoln, a McKinley, a John Hay, and a Theodore Roosevelt, and they direct in the legislation of the nation for the welfare of the world.

So the truths directly relating to our spiritual lives were not whispered to the world even by angels' voices, but revealed by Jesus Christ. There seemed to be no other way to make a revelation that we might at all comprehend. If they had been written in the language of the angels, or had been painted on the sky or in the clouds above us, the scholars might have read them, and then gone home to debate as to their meaning. You could not reveal to an untutored son of the forest the method by which a telegram is sent under the waters of the deep blue sea. You could not show a boy of

five how to complete the square in a quadratic equation. Neither could God reveal to us the mighty truths concerning life and duty and destiny by any abstract statement. He gave us a life, the life of a man so filled with God that He could say, "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father." This is God's revelation to us. Jesus Christ, "God manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

He is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever.

First, He is the same in His teachings. Our experience is that our theories change more or less as the years go by. As our horizon broadens and our spiritual insight is developed, we let go entirely some things which we once prized, so that our sermons must be rewritten and not preached when the manuscript has become "the sere and yellow leaf." The progress of truth has compelled us to change.

About thirty years ago I read a book, the author of which was at that time under fire as a heretic. After reading the book through carefully, I should say there was not a word in it which might not have been written by any bishop in our great

Church. I was perplexed for a time as to why a man who wrote that book could be accused of being heretical, until I accidentally turned to the title page and there discovered that it had been written many years before. He had changed.

There was a time when the Constitution of the United States was adopted,—one of the sublimest documents in all statesmanship. It took the thirteen colonies, and made a nation. Time rolled on, and great as was that document, wise as were the men who adopted it, changes had to be made. Again and again the American freeman has come with a ballot in his hand, which falls as silently

“As snowflakes fall upon the sod,
But executes the freeman’s will,
As lightning does the will of God.”

And that Constitution has been changed. If a humble Methodist preacher might make a suggestion, it requires a few changes to-day to meet the new conditions.

The teachings of the greatest authors are frequently “revised and enlarged,” but what Jesus taught remains for all time without the need of change. It never occurred to any one to suggest that the world would be benefited by suspending

or annulling one of the Beatitudes. He uttered the truth for all time and the truth for the last man.

I do n't know what the critics may do with the Bible, nor do I care. If it ought to stand it will stand, and if it ought not to stand it will not stand; but if they should take away everything but the first sixteen verses of the fifth chapter of Matthew, there is enough left upon which to build a Church that will fill the world.

His teachings, I repeat, remain unchanged and unchangeable.

Again, He is the same in His relation to penitent sinners. The New Testament is very largely a picture gallery. Let us look at one of the pictures now.

A woman is brought into His presence charged with a crime. He said to her accusers, "Let one of you that is without sin begin to execute the law," and then He stooped and wrote with His finger in the sand. The accusers went out one by one, condemned by their own consciences, and when He arose the woman stood before Him. Why had He stooped to write? This is the only instance on record of His having written anything. Strange, is it not, that the Man who never wrote but once should have given occasion for the publishing of so many

books for and against Him that they would almost load the navies of the globe?

He stooped to write, not for permanent record, but because He was so much of a gentleman and so delicate in His sensibilities that He would not be guilty of staring the poor accused woman in the face while she was under the charge of a crime, and that in the presence of her accusers. When He arose and said, "Where are thine accusers? Has no man condemned thee?" with tearful eye and quivering lip she replied, "No man, Lord." Then said He, "Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more."

You may tell me of sin and its consequences and of the folly of death-bed repentance, and in all that you say there is much of truth; but with that picture before my mind and on my heart of the penitent receiving His forgiveness I will search for the last and the worst of Adam's fallen sons, and daughters too, and whisper in the ear of each:

"There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea."

Next, He is the same in His relation to childhood. There was a summer afternoon when the mothers of Salem came to see this young Prophet who was performing such wonderful works,

prompted simply by woman's curiosity. They brought their children as you would take your children for a walk along the bank of a river on a summer evening. But when they drew near unto Him and felt the majesty of His presence, the desire arose in their hearts that He would bless the children, and they brought them to Him. The disciples neither understood their Lord nor the depth of love in a mother's heart, and they said to the women: "Go away, now, if you please, and do n't trouble the Master with such matters. He has other things to think about. Come again another time, if you must, but do n't disturb Him now." But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased, and said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." That blessing fell on those children, and at the same time it fell on all the children of all the ages. "The atonement casts the shadow of its wings of healing on every cradle in every clime." So that our children are all in the arms of Jesus Christ. Those children in your homes, whose cheery voices will say "good-night" as they retire to rest, and who will greet you with a cheery "Good-morning, papa and mamma"—those children in your homes are all in the arms of Jesus Christ. And that

great multitude of children who have left our homes and have left our hearts all desolate ; whom we miss in the morning, and the patter of whose footsteps we hear no more upon the stairs ; whose merry voices nevermore awaken the tender emotions that once they stirred,—all those children out of our sight are in the arms of Jesus Christ. He is the same in His relation to childhood.

He is the same in His relation to earth's suffering and sorrowing ones.

Sorrow fits into human life as the waters of a lake fit into the shore. Sooner or later a shadow falls upon every path. Let us look at a picture.

A father and mother and four happy children. It is a winter evening, and they are sitting in the parlor. Father is telling the boys some of his experiences when he was young ; or mother is reading to the little girls some sweet story, or relating some experience, or giving words of instruction,—father and mother and children constituting one happy family. There is nothing better in heaven, nothing in the calm round of heaven's bliss superior to the joy of living in such circumstances as these. But, my friends, that circle will be broken. Death will come and take one of that happy group. It may be that father will be stricken down, and a

weeping widow and fatherless children will be left to mourn; or the stroke of death may take that mother away, and leave a splendid man heartbroken and little children motherless; or it may be that one of these children will be called to taste the bitterness of death when life has only just begun. I have tried to comfort mourners in such hours as these, and have felt that my words were poverty-stricken, and that I was only deepening the wounds that I tried to heal.

The ravages of death will go on until another of that family is taken, and then another, and another, until after awhile there will not be one of that happy group left upon this earth. In such a world are we spending our uncertain years, where even

“The paths of glory lead but to the grave.”

Now, when I read in the New Testament that “Jesus wept,” I remember that those tears fell in sympathy with Martha and Mary when they told Him that their brother was dead, and, remembering that Jesus is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever, I say to all earth’s mourning and sorrowing ones, “When you baptize the graves of your dead with your tears, you shed not those tears alone; the

heart of the Eternal beats in tenderest sympathy with you."

Jesus Christ is God's perfect revelation of Himself to the world, and He is the same in the past, the present, and the future. His teachings remain the law of life for all men everywhere. His forgiving Spirit still says, "Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more." He still says, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not," and He still gives His unfailing sympathy to earth's bereaved and sorrowing ones. In Him the sons of men may safely trust.

"O that with yonder sacred throng
We at His feet may fall!
We'll join the everlasting song,
And crown Him Lord of all."

II.

LOVE THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW.

"Love is the fulfilling of the law."—ROM. XIII, 10

I AM glad that it is, because this makes the fulfillment of the law possible to each of us. There are many things we might not be able to do. If to fulfill the law it was necessary to master all knowledge, we might lack the brains. If to fulfill the law it was necessary to face the cannon's mouth, we might lack the nerve. If to fulfill the law it was necessary to journey around the world, we might lack the cash; but we can all love. So I am glad that love, not brains, or nerve, or wealth, is the fulfilling of the law. I think that love is natural to the human heart. We must love. There must be some object upon which our affections shall be fixed. The prisoner loves the little flower that he may be permitted to cultivate in his lonely cell.

Thirty years ago I read a sermon by the late Bishop D. W. Clark on "The Supreme Affection." In this sermon I have followed his classification of the affections.

R. F.

The tramp loves a dog that will follow him through the street. The driver loves his horse, pats his neck, strokes his mane, and talks to him like a friend. The engineer loves his engine, and speaks to it like a thing of intelligence. Love is everywhere. So I am glad that the fulfilling of the law is along the line of the natural exercise of the functions of the human soul.

The first question that arises is, Who or what are the proper objects of our love? The great Teacher answers this question and makes it perfectly clear: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." On these two commandments hang the law and the prophets.

Who is my neighbor? The man who votes my ticket on election day; the man who subscribes to my creed, who kneels with me at the shrine, who lives on the same fashionable avenue, and whose children are good enough to play with mine. These are my neighbors.

But the other man who disputes every proposition of my creed, political or religious; the man who lives in Swede Hollow or Connemara Flats, is my neighbor too. But all my neighbors have not the same claim upon me. I do not feel towards the man who has injured me, and continues to injure me, as I do towards the friend who has stood by

me in life's conflict, who was close to me in my hour of greatest need. I am supposed to recognize these differences. We sustain different relations to different individuals, and these differences are to be recognized.

What about my enemy? The Scriptures say, "Love your enemies." Feed them if they are hungry, clothe them if they are naked, minister unto them if they are sick; but they are your enemies yet. Shall we forgive our enemies? Yes, upon the same terms upon which God forgives us, when we repent and ask forgiveness. God's disposition towards us is always one of forgiveness; but we are not forgiven until we repent and pray. So when those who have injured us shall repent and ask forgiveness, we must forgive them as our Heavenly Father forgives us; but before they reach that point it is our duty and our privilege to have a forgiving spirit. We must be ready to forgive. It is not ours to take vengeance. "Vengeance is mine and I will repay, saith the Lord." It is the lowest and not the highest type of manhood that seeks for vengeance. Any low and uncultivated mortal could shoot an enemy; but it takes a high-born, God-anointed man to control himself and have a forgiving spirit.

The act of forgiveness can not take place between men until the wrong-doer is ready to receive forgiveness,—just as I can not give you my watch unless you will receive it.

But let us rejoice that among the teeming millions of men on earth we have but few enemies. It is scarcely wise to think much about one stormy day, when nearly all the days are full of sunshine; to worry very much over one day of sickness, when nearly every day is a day of bounding health; or to think much of an occasional enemy, when nearly all mankind sustains another relation to us.

What about mankind generally? What is that feeling that rises in your soul as you see a man lying on a stretcher suffering intense pain? He met with an accident up yonder in the lumber camp. Four splendid fellows with hard hands and sunburned cheeks, but tender, manly hearts, have brought him to the station. He is being taken to the hospital. You never saw him before; but the moment your eye rests upon the suffering mortal wrapped in his gray blanket, all the best that is in you comes to the surface, and you wonder if his mother knows that he has been hurt. You wonder if he has a wife and children, and ask yourself, "Who will earn bread for them now?" And if you had the power

you would heal his wounds and make him well again. What sentiment is that? It is in every heart. It is the sentiment of humanity, and on this in its last analysis all our philanthropic and charitable institutions are based. Out of this splendid sentiment they are all developed. We give our money to build a hospital, not because of some individual in whom we are interested, who we hope shall receive treatment there, but because humanity needs the hospital.

We give money to send the gospel to Greenland's icy mountains or India's coral strand, not because of some individual in whom we are interested, but because humanity needs the gospel. So we draw a circle large enough to include the whole human race and label it "Humanity;" and loyalty to its claims is the fulfilling of the law. Let us not fail to sympathize with the missionary societies of the world, as they are organized to send the glad tidings of the gospel to earth's remotest bound. We are under obligations to those who dwell on the slopes of the Himalayas, the banks of the Ganges, within the great wall of China, amid the dark jungles of Africa,—to the people of every continent and every island that gems the distant sea.

The old philosopher was right when he said, "I

am a man, therefore whatever interests mankind interests me."

But while humanity has its claims, we must remember that for the present the human race is divided into nations, and nations do not exist by accident. Every nation that was and is not, played its little part in God's great plan. The nations that are, have their destined work to accomplish. God rules and overrules, and makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder of wrath does He restrain. He rules and overrules in the affairs of men and nations. We are under especial obligations to our own beloved land, the land of our birth or the land of our adoption. In this great country of ours many of us must love two lands. We are not asked to forget the land where we first saw the light, nor the land that furnished our mother a grave. Some of us realize that oftentimes our hearts turn with fond affection toward the sunny vales of old Albion, to the hills and glens of Caledonia, or the banks of the Shannon. Perhaps among the mountains of Scandinavia or on the banks of the Rhine, there is a spot that is known as the home of our childhood, and we do well to cultivate that tender sentiment, love of country, love for the land of our birth. But whether we are in the United States

by birth or by adoption, this is the land whose flag furnishes us protection, and the Star-spangled Banner, as it waves "o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave," must have our first, our highest, our holiest allegiance, and no man has a right to the protection of a flag that he would not follow, if need be, to his death. Even

"Romans in Rome's quarrel
Spared neither land nor gold,
Nor son nor wife, nor limb nor life,
In the brave days of old."

This country, then, which we so proudly call our own, is to be loved beyond any other land under the shining stars, and it is well worthy of our love. Its foundations were laid when the Pilgrim Fathers landed on "the bleak New England shore."

"What sought they thus afar?—
Bright jewels of the mine?
The wealth of seas, the spoils of war?
They sought a faith's pure shrine.

Aye, call it holy ground,
The soil where first they trod:
They have left unstained what here they found,
Freedom to worship God."

The eighty millions of American people have a stronger claim on me than any other eighty millions among all the uncounted millions of earth.

Here I draw another circle concentric with the first, but of shorter diameter, and label it "Patriotism." Loyalty to its claims is the fulfilling of the law.

Among the eighty millions who dwell upon these shores, there are only a few thousands who know me by name, and whom I can name at sight. Their eyes light up with a kindly glance as I draw near; their hands grasp mine in friendship. When they are with me, life's burdens seem to be not so heavy and life's joys are greatly increased. These I call my friends.

You have read the story of Damon and Pythias. One condemned to death, the other became hostage for him that he might go and see his wife and children. The day of execution drew near. The one under sentence of death prayed the gods that the winds and waves might favor him, and the other prayed the gods that the winds and waves might hinder him,—each one anxious to die to save his friend. Such is friendship in its highest manifestations. No wonder that the tyrant said, "Live, live, incomparable men, and teach me by precept and

example how to become worthy to participate in a friendship so sacred."

You have all read that beautiful story in Holy Writ, of David and Jonathan. When Jonathan died on Gilboa's height, David took up this lamentation: "How wast thou slain upon thine high places, my Brother Jonathan! Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." Friendship is a sacred word. Loyalty to its claims is the fulfilling of the law.

A few practical observations may be of value. We must not expect perfection in our friend. We must take our friend and his faults, or be without a friend. We must help him in the hour of his need, defend him in his absence, and come the closest to him in the hour of his greatest distress. It is said that prosperity makes friends, and adversity tries them. It is also true that while prosperity makes friends sometimes prosperity tries them. There is

"Base envy that withers at another's joy,
And hates the excellence it can not reach."

Here are six young men. They came from the same country neighborhood, and entered college together. After four years of college life, graduation

day came. Each one walked up and received his diploma from the president's hand with that

"Strange swelling of the breast
He ne'er shall feel again;"

and they go out of school into life's great battle together. We imagine that five of them fail, and one succeeds. We can not always be sure as to what is success and what is failure. God alone can determine that, and we shall know only when the mists have cleared away. It may be that what we call failure, God has recorded as success, and that what we call success, Heaven has branded as a failure.

But, according to our measurements of success and failure, of our six boys, one succeeds, the others fail. I wonder if the other five will love him now as once they did? It takes a broad and generous and manly soul to remain down in the obscurity of the valley while a competitor climbs to the mountain top, where

"Fame and honors lofty shine."

Will those who failed be large enough and brave enough to say to the successful competitor: "On,

brave spirit, on! You were one of us. We were boys together, and your honor sheds glory on the class." Genuine friendship endures all tests.

I draw another circle concentric with the first two, but of very much shorter diameter, and label it "Friendship."

There is another institution established before sin had touched Eden's glories and caused them to wither. An institution older than the State, older than the lodge, older than the school, older than the Church—an institution of God's own planting, that has come down on the waves of sixty centuries unwrecked, unbroken; that is here to-day, the glory of the nation, the glory of the land, holier than State or school or Church. That institution we call *Home*—where manhood's strength and womanhood's tenderness and purity and beauty blend in divine proportions, and sweet and happy children bless the bond of union. Let us look at a picture for a moment.

The air is filled with the fragrance of the flowers, and the music of the marriage bell falls upon our ear. There stand before the altar a young man in his strength and a young woman in her beauty. Parents, relatives, and friends are gathered near.

The scene is in the old church, hallowed by a thousand blessed memories. The minister of Jesus Christ stands before them with the ritual in his hand, and their hands are clasped in marriage. He pronounces the blessing of the Church upon them, "God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, bless, preserve, and keep you; the Lord mercifully with His favor look upon you, and so fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace that ye may so live together in this life that in the world to come ye may have life everlasting." They go out into life side by side to share its joy and sorrow, its pleasure and pain, its gladness and grief, its feasts and funerals, its successes and failures; and after fifty years have gone we imagine we meet them again where we saw them that bright May morning of their marriage day. But what a change. His shoulders are stooped, his eye is dim, his natural strength has abated, his right hand has lost its cunning, his memory falters; and yet there is in his face the evidence of wisdom and strength that have been gathered during the fifty years. His wife stands by his side. She looks up into his face and says, "My precious husband, I love you more than I did that morning fifty years ago when first I was your bride!" A marked change appears in her also. Her face is

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wrinkled now, her hand is shriveled and withered and worn. Her beautiful auburn hair has turned white from the bleaching process of the fifty years; but he, noble man that he is, looks down into her eyes and says: "My precious wife! 'Neither shattered strength, nor faded beauty will ever pluck the laurels from your brow.' Every wrinkle on your face is fairer than the blush on a maiden's cheek, and your withered, worn, and shriveled hand is more beautiful than the jeweled hand of a princess. I love you more than I did that morning long ago when first you were my bride." Here is domestic bliss. Here is the fulfilling of the law. To make the little cottage home in which they live a new addition to heaven would not mar the beauty and the glory of the place. There is nothing higher in heaven itself, nothing holier than the devotion of two such lives to each other through all the varying fortunes of the passing years.

Let us think also of the love of mother. How poor, how utterly bankrupt the world would be if we should awake some morning and find that mother-love had all vanished in the night! The love of father is tender too. His voice is not so sweet and his hand not so tender, yet a true father's love is undying, is immortal. Love of parents for children,

and children for parents, adds a glory like that of heaven to things on earth. Mrs. Hemans sings:

“They grew in beauty side by side,
They filled one home with glee.”

You see that picture. She gives us another in the next two lines:

“Their graves are severed far and wide
By mountains, stream, and sea.

The same fond mother bent at night
O'er each fair sleeping brow;
She had each folded flower in sight,—
Where are those dreamers now?”

Then one of the most beautiful poems in the language tells us where the graves of the household are:

“One sleeps where Southern vines are dressed
Above the noble slain;
He wrapped his colors round his breast
On a blood-red field of Spain.

One mid the forest of the West
By a dark stream is laid;
The Indian knows his place of rest
Far in the cedar's shade.

The sea, the blue lone sea hath one.
 He lies where pearls lie deep.
 He was the loved of all, yet none
 O'er his low bed may weep.

And one, o'er her the myrtle showers
 Its leaves by soft winds fanned;
 She faded midst Italian bowers
 The last of that bright band.

And parted thus, the rest who played
 Beneath the same green tree,
 Whose voices mingled as they prayed
 Around one parent knee.

They that with smiles lit up the hall,
 And cheered with mirth the hearth,—
 Alas for love, if this were all
 And naught beyond the earth!"

How sweet and tender the affection that thus binds together parents and children, until at last the grave marks the resting-place of each!

It should be noted that these affections are not exercised at the expense of each other. There is no conflict among them. The man who loves humanity is all the more likely to love his country and his friend and his family. The normal exercise of each but strengthens every other. The man who is true to his family is all the more likely to be loyal to his

friend and to his country and humanity. Like the colors of the rainbow, these affections blend in divine proportions and are a thing of beauty.

We draw then another circle of very short diameter, concentric with the other three, and label it "Home."

We will now glance for a moment at the center of the circle. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." God is revealed in Jesus Christ. To love Him is to love the Father, and surely He is worthy of our love. All the qualities in men that we most admire—courage and tenderness, strength and pity, mastery and forgiveness—are found in Him in perfection.

Children should love Him, for He said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not." Women should love Him, for he emancipated womanhood. Where His gospel is not known, woman is man's slave, or his plaything, or his toy. Where His gospel is preached, she stands up as man's equal.

Men should love Him, for He was the manliest Man that ever trod the earth; the greatest Hero that ever spoke a word; the wisest Teacher to whom the world has ever listened; the greatest Benefactor that ever blessed the world with His presence.

In all His achievements He shed no blood but His own, and in the path along which this Conqueror comes there is not the sigh of the widow, and the tear of the orphan, and the groans of the vanquished, but blessings and benedictions for all. He is the Conqueror of death. He went down into the shadow of the grave, and came out again on this side, to show us that death does not hurt a man, that it is only an incident in an endless career. He stands with outstretched hands pleading to all to come to Him that they may have life. May the love of God revealed in Christ fill our hearts, control our lives, regulate our conduct, and bring us at last to the land where He is seated upon the right hand of the Majesty on high, and sin and sorrow and death are forever banished.

III.

THE EASY YOKE AND LIGHT BURDEN.

"My yoke is easy, and my burden is light."—MATT.
XI, 30.

THE twenty-eighth verse of this chapter contains an invitation so broad that it would be startling were it not for our familiarity with the words. On the lips of any other than the Person who first uttered them, they would expose the speaker to the charge of insanity. Here is One who says to all the weary and heavy laden of the world, "Come unto me, and find rest," and the words seem perfectly fitting and proper as they fall from His lips. We have no suspicion for a moment that He has undertaken more than He can accomplish. We remember that with a few loaves and fishes He fed the multitude; that with a word He stilled the storm upon the angry sea; that He cured leprosy with the touch of His hand; that He opened blind eyes, caused the lame to leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing,—yes, He

even raised the dead by the majesty of His voice and the power of His presence. When we behold Him do these wonderful works, and perform them all with such ease and naturalness and without any apparent effort on His part, we feel at once that when He undertakes to give rest to all the weary and heavy laden, He will be equal to the task.

We notice, too, that these wonderful works were performed by Him, not to show his power; they were works of mercy and showed His power, but they were performed because they were needed. He had compassion on the multitudes; therefore, He fed them. He pitied the blind man, therefore, when He heard him cry out, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me," He stopped and opened his eyes. He stilled the storm upon the lake as He stretched forth His hand and said, "Peace, be still," and the murmuring wind and the brawling wave fell mutely at His feet. He did this, not to show His power, but to quiet the fears of His frightened disciples; and when He stopped the funeral procession and raised the young man to life, it was because His great heart was touched with pity for the widow who was burying her only son.

We have no fear but that He will be able to give rest to all the weary ones who come to Him.

We notice that the manner of giving rest is, at first sight, somewhat startling. He says virtually, "Come to Me, and let Me put a yoke on your neck and a burden on your shoulders, and these will rest you." A strange way, it would seem, of giving rest; but, on second thought, we see that this is in harmony with the nature of things. We never think of tired ones in heaven. No poet ever sang of an angel who folded his weary wing and could go no further, and yet in heaven all are busy—a place of ceaseless activity and of perfect rest. Rest is secured by finding the perfect equilibrium, the perfect balance of all our powers. In heaven they have found that perfect condition; hence it is a place of perfect rest.

Sin is not a foreign substance thrown in upon the soul to be washed away. It is only by poetic license that we sing about washing away our sins. Sin is demoralization. **Salvation** is the reconstruction of our manhood on a **basis** of perfect righteousness. **Salvation** is **character built** after the Christly pattern.

If we could always **remember** that we are animals, and be true to the laws of our animal life, and remember at the same time that we are spirits, and be true to the laws of spirit life; and remember at the same time that we are moral beings, and be true

to the laws of the moral world in which we live,—we would find the yoke always easy and the burden always light.

The man who is well born the first time does not need so much to be born again, and absolute loyalty to God and the laws of our physical, intellectual, and moral being would prolong life and greatly increase our capacity for service. We ought to live a hundred years, and should grow stronger physically, mentally, and morally up to seventy or eighty years of age, and reach well up towards a hundred, before the weary wheels would stand still.

I call your attention, next, to the thought that we have no choice as to whether we will wear a yoke or have freedom from a yoke. A yoke each must wear. We have the choice of yokes and the choice of burdens; but a yoke we must wear, and a burden we must carry. And the yoke of Jesus Christ is not so galling as the yoke that Satan would put upon our necks; the burden of righteousness is not so heavy as the burden of wickedness.

Who has the heavier burden to carry now,—the man who, true to his country and its laws, walks the street in perfect peace of mind, or the man conscious of having violated the law and is watching constantly lest he fall into the hands of the officers?

Who wears the more galling yoke,—the sober and temperate man, or the man who has formed an appetite for intoxicating liquors? Which burden is the heavier,—the burden of honesty or the burden of dishonesty; the burden of truth or the burden of falsehood? To the man who tries to keep the law of God, all nature spreads out before his eye as one beautiful picture, and all the voices of nature make music for him, and he keeps step with the music of the spheres; whereas the man who dares to violate the laws of his being, brings friction and trouble and discontent, and finds the burden heavy.

In further discussion of the subject I call your attention to the simple fact that the burden of the Christian man is lighter financially than the burden of the sinner. Let us admit that the Church is expensive. It costs uncounted millions to build churches and parsonages, support ministers, benevolent societies, and organizations. It takes a large amount of money to meet all the demands of the Church in these days. While this is true, it is not the Church that impoverishes people. There is another institution in this land that is the financial burden upon our people,—the saloon and its associate evils. The saloon is the expensive institution in America, yielding no return. It takes the light out

of woman's eye, the color out of her cheek, the joy out of her home, the peace out of her soul, and the hope out of her future, as she sees father, husband, brother, or son dragged down to a dishonored grave, where Despair takes Pity by the hand and leads her away to weep alone in a night that skirts eternal deserts.

And while the saloon is working these terrible ravages in society and in the home, it is the most expensive institution in the land.

That splendid fellow with a moderate income, gives twenty-five dollars a year to support his Church. It seems like a large sum; but if he were frequenting the saloon and the gambling den or other forbidden places, twenty-five dollars would not last long. It is cheaper in dollars and cents to stand loyally by the Church and its institutions than to be a devotee of the saloon.

Again, it will be seen that the yoke is easy and the burden light when we remember that God has a way of giving strength to His people. He takes as much of the burden as is above our strength. God and one man can carry a heavy burden.

A few years ago we made a gash in the bosom of old Mother Earth, and laid away to rest the body of a man, a husband, a father. Even good people

asked, "How can that woman support those children?" The answer is, "She did support them." God and one sensible woman can take care of fatherless children.

There is another man who sings, while his heart is heavy, songs full of hope and cheer. He smiles as though he never knew what sorrow was. He is brave in the face of danger, patient under provocation, a cultured Christian gentleman. Those who know him best often ask, "How does he accomplish so much and render such heroic, faithful service, while his heart is breaking with a nameless grief?" The answer is, "He does this work because God is with him." God and one man can carry a heavy burden. God has a way of helping people.

"When one who holds communion with the skies
Has filled his urn where the pure waters rise,
And mingles once again with meaner things,
'T is even as if an angel shook his wings.
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,
And tells us whence those treasures are supplied."

Again, it will be seen that the yoke is easy if we remember that it is a service of love, and love's burdens are always light. I admit that there are Christians who have not yet arisen to that dignity of experience where obligation has become a privilege and

where duty is a delight. They are yet in the realm where fear is the propelling motive. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and some men must start from that level. But though a man begins the service of God through the motive of fear he will soon reach the place where "perfect love casteth out fear."

Here is a man living in a part of the country where there are fever and ague and malaria. He knows it is unhealthy, but he loves the little cabin home at the foot of the hill. He would be lonesome the day he did not see the old elm-tree that flings its shadow across his path, or the great rock beside the path yonder that leads to the spring that bubbles from the hillside. It would be a lonesome day for him when he did not see that rock or drink of the waters of that spring, so he clings to his humble home notwithstanding the danger. After a time so many of his neighbors die around him that he becomes thoroughly alarmed, and says, "I shall leave this place for a while, and I shall go up on the hillside yonder, and when the epidemic passes away I shall return to my home." So, driven out by fear, he ascends the hill, and lo! as the landscape spreads in beauty at his feet, as the music of the song-bird and the fragrance of the flowers fill the air, he is

enraptured and says at once: "I love this place. I shall not return to the place whence I came. I shall here and now say good-bye forever to the old home." He was driven out by fear from that home; but now love has cast out all fear, and he scarcely knows when the transformation took place. It is so with the Christian. The service which we render exerts a transforming influence upon us until gradually all fear is cast out and love is enthroned. This makes the burden light.

There is a young minister. He preaches to a small congregation in the country schoolhouse on Sunday morning, drives across the prairie and preaches in another schoolhouse to a small company of believers; and, buttoning a threadbare coat about him, he drives another ten miles and preaches in the evening to a little company that has come to the schoolhouse to hear him; and that work is repeated every Sunday on the merest pittance of a salary. Pity him if you will, but the greatest affliction that could befall him would be for the bishop or presiding elder to say to him at the next Conference, "We have no place for you this year." Small as is his income, meager his salary, limited his field of operations, he loves his Bible, his Church, his Savior, his God. He knew he was laying the foundations of

empire, that he was helping to make the world habitable, and love made his burden light.

I know an old man in one of the little towns in a Western State, a member of the Church. He had seen most of the members remove from the place until there were but himself and a few good women who constituted the Church in that village. He served as janitor, sexton, class-leader, steward, trustee, Sunday-school superintendent, and preached occasionally. He was so thoroughly alone in his work, and so thoroughly wedded to it, that when he walked down the street the boys would sometimes say, "Hello! there goes the Methodist Church!" The greatest affliction that could have befallen him would have been for some one in authority to have prevented his doing these things. He rendered a service of love, and love made the burden light.

There is a good woman. Her sick baby is in the cradle. She is wife and mother, housekeeper, nurse, and servant, all in one. You could hire more work than she can do, but you could not hire mother-love. It is a service of love she is rendering, and that makes her burden light.

Fully forty years ago a power arose in the Southland that struck at the integrity of the Union. Abraham Lincoln was in the White House, and God Al-

mighty was on the throne. There was a call for volunteers, and immediately citizens were transformed into soldiers. Men whose hearts were calm and brave, and boys whose hearts were bold and fiery,

“Looked out on hill and plain
As sights they ne’er might see again.”

Each one kissed wife or mother, or sister or sweetheart a fond good-bye, and buttoned a coat of blue around his manly bosom, shouldered a musket, and marched away and away to do and dare, and die, if need be, rather than that the Starry Flag should be trailed in the defiling dust. Why? Because each one was a patriot and loved his country, and love made the burden light. Many a man hastened to duty, and halted in death. Many a brave man rode through storm of shot and shell to meet a hero’s death, all for love of country. Noble and tender women gave new silken banners to the boys in blue and said, “Come home in your casket, if need be, but stand by your country’s flag.” Why? Each woman loved her country, too, and love made the burden light.

Thus the exalted service which God calls us to render unto Him at home or abroad, in city or country, in the full blaze of light in the public eye, or in the obscurity and quietness of the home—wherever

we render loyal service to Him, the transforming power of His grace will so change and strengthen us that the heaviest burdens will seem to be light, and the yoke that we thought perhaps would be galling will be found to be easy on our necks.

Another thought in the further elucidation of this subject is this:

This life is short. It is soon over, and if the bliss of heaven may be won through fidelity in one short life, if we are never to be placed in peril the second time, and if we are assured that through fidelity in one brief life we gain the joy and bliss of the eternal world, on our first day in heaven we shall be enabled to look back and say, though at times we staggered under the weight of the burden, and though at times the yoke seemed to be galling, yet, after all, in the light of the full fruition that is here begun, it is true that the yoke was easy and the burden was light.

Again, critics tell us that Jesus did not say, "I will give you rest," but the sweeter, dearer words, "I will rest you." Mother does not sleep so soundly but that she hears the cry of her child in any part of the house, and when that child cries out in the darkness, in a moment mother is by its side. Her presence quiets it. She does not give the child rest or quiet, she rests it—she quiets it.

God did not say to Abraham, "Fear not, I will give you a great shield, which carrying before you, you will be safe." He did say, "Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield." He did not say, "Fear not, Abraham, I will give you a great reward." He did say "Fear not, Abraham, I am thy great reward." So Jesus did not say, "I will give you rest," but "I will rest you."

"Labor is rest and pain is sweet
If Thou, my God, art near."

"He came to my desk with quivering lip,
The lesson was done.
'Have you a new leaf for me, dear teacher?' he said,
'I have spoiled this one.'
I took his leaf, all stained and blotted,
And gave him a new one all unspotted,
And into his sad eyes smiled,
'Do better now, my child.'

I went to the Throne with quivering heart,
The year was done.
'Hast Thou a new leaf for me, dear Father?' I said,
'I have spoiled this one.'
He took my leaf, all stained and blotted,
And gave me a new one all unspotted,
And into my sad heart smiled,
'Do better now, my child.'"

IV.

THE SALT OF THE EARTH.

"Ye are the salt of the earth."—MATT. v, 13.

THESE words occur in connection with that most wonderful portion of Scripture called the Beatitudes: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." We might read, "for they shall inherit the earth," "for they shall obtain mercy," "for they shall see God."

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." We might read, "for they shall inherit the earth," "for they shall obtain mercy," "for they shall be called the children of God." In other words we may take the first part of any verse, and finish the statement with the last part of any other verse.

Of the meek it may be said, "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven; they shall inherit the earth; they shall obtain mercy; they shall see God."

The Beatitudes are not so much like a casket of jewels, each one alike precious, to be taken in any order, but may be likened to a string of pearls ar-

ranged in a certain definite order. A genuine religious experience is outlined here. We may have a genuine religious experience, and yet be in doubt as to its genuineness, because we measure ourselves by wrong standards. At the same time we may be very confident as to the genuineness of our experience, while there is reason for doubt. We may have a genuine experience, and yet not be able to relate it intelligently. It is so difficult to find words that express the feelings of the soul.

The ideal experience is where the child is born in a Christian home and comes to mature years without consciously and willfully departing from God. I suppose that, practically, this is realized in but rare instances.

Conversion is an experience through which sinners must pass as they return to God. Conversion is not necessary in the case of children born in the kingdom and kept in the kingdom through prayer and faithful effort upon the part of Christian parents. But even in such cases, poverty of spirit will always lie at the base of the experience.

Usually the soul must pass through that crisis called conversion, and when the young man of twenty, who has wandered far from the ways of righteousness, repents, believes, and is converted and

relates a joyous experience, there is danger that the other young man of twenty, who has always kept the faith that his mother taught him, may be disturbed in his peace of mind because, as he contrasts his experience with that which the other young man relates, he says: "I have no such joy, and no such peace, and no such ecstasy. Possibly I am not a Christian." Now, this young man, though thus for the moment filled with doubts, is the one to be congratulated. It will be impossible to have David's experience unless we have committed David's sin, and let us thank God that we have no such an experience, either of the sin or the deliverance therefrom. But whether brought up from childhood in the way of righteousness or converted later in life, poverty of spirit is the beginning of a genuine experience. Blessed is the man who has discovered his spiritual bankruptcy. Blessed is the man who says,

"Nothing in my hand I bring:
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

Let us imagine that an angel in heaven who has been there ten thousand years, if we may imagine the use of years where there are no years, but where eternity is stamped upon everything. Let us im-

agine that this angel has always been obedient, but at a given moment he disobeys one command. Suppose that the next moment he repents. You must clearly see that in that moment of lapse he has bankrupted himself. If that be true in the case of an angel, how true it is in the case of the best people whom we know! How few of us there are who come up to that measure of goodness that leads us unselfishly to care for others, to pray for our enemies! How many of us would die praying for our murderers?

The old minister on his death-bed who said to his colleague, "I am gathering up all my good deeds and my bad deeds, my successes and my failures, and I am casting all overboard, and am going into heaven on a single plank of gospel grace," was right. There is no other way into heaven. "By grace are ye saved."

We retain our poverty of experience all through life, and to that we add the next phase suggested by the words, "Blessed are they that mourn."

Mourning here means penitence; not that state of mind that we have when we lose our fortunes or fail in our speculations or miss life's prizes, but sorrow for sin. Blessed are the penitent. Penitence is the attitude of the soul toward God. There is a

measure of faith before penitence begins, and there will be a degree of penitence after faith has taken hold upon the Savior. Mental philosophers teach that we never forget anything. Possibly they are mistaken. We have already forgotten most of the sorrows of our childhood, and it may be that when we reach the perfect life of heaven we shall forget the unpleasant things of this life; but if our sins are remembered there, they will be remembered with a feeling of penitence. "Blessed are they that mourn."

To these two phases of Christian experience, the third is added, expressed by the words, "Blessed are the meek." Only the meek shall inherit the earth, the kingdom of heaven. Only the meek shall obtain mercy; only the meek shall see God. Teachableness and docility of spirit are essential elements in the Christian life.

Then "blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness." Notice the words used—hunger and thirst. A hungry man would toss a crown aside for a loaf of bread. The thirsty man would refuse pearls to receive a glass of water. Hunger and thirst must be satisfied, and this hunger and thirst are not after joy or pleasure or bliss, but after righteousness. The greatest thing in the world is

to be right. Being justified by faith means being rectified or made right by faith, and the blessedness is in the appetite, not simply in the being filled. The being filled comes as a matter of course where the hunger and thirst exist.

Another phase of experience is added: "Blessed are the merciful." The unmerciful man excludes from his own soul thereby the mercy of God. It is not that God will not have mercy, but it is true that man can not receive mercy unless he himself be merciful.

"The mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me."

"The quality of mercy is not strained :
It droppeth as the gentle dew from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed,—
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes."

The forgiveness of others is the condition upon which God forgives us. The exercising of mercy toward others brings God's mercy to our own souls.

"Blessed are the pure in heart." I am glad that it does not read, "Blessed are the great in intellect," or "Blessed are the rich in this world's goods," but "Blessed are the pure in heart." This brings the vision of God within the reach of all; for if all may not be rich or great, all can be pure. Some good and

well-meaning but mistaken people teach that there are two classes of Christians,—some with impure hearts and others with pure hearts. Just in proportion as we are pure in heart we are Christian. In proportion as we lack purity of heart, in that proportion we fail of being Christian. Blessed are right intentions, pure motives. Blessed is the heart that can open itself to the gaze of the universe and say, "Search." Such will always have the vision of God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers." We are peacemakers, not so much by virtue of what we try to do as by virtue of what we are. A very weak and unworthy individual can make trouble. The man with no reputation can injure you; but it requires a man of character or ability to help. An idiot can, with a match, burn valuable property; but it takes a man of brains to build what any one can destroy. It requires character to be a peacemaker. "Blessed are the peacemakers." Those people who, being poor in spirit, and meek and hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and merciful and pure in heart, become peacemakers, and are therefore the children of God.

Then, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake." Is it possible that

there is blessedness in this? Is it not enough if, when we are persecuted, we stand up and are brave and strong, and say, "The storm has beaten upon others, and why not upon me? Others have suffered, and why should I not suffer?" Great are courage, strength, and power to endure; but the Stoic had all these. The Stoical philosophy has its own value, and the Stoic has no monopoly of his own philosophy; it is mine as well.

The Christian philosophy not only says, Endure the storm, bear the ills that are incident to life, suffer persecution as a brave man, but, in the midst of persecution rejoice and be exceeding glad. Why? Because "so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." You give evidence now that you are in the company of the elect of whom the world was not worthy. The saints of God have often endured cruel mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover, bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, were slain with the sword, were destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy. All the mighty ones of earth, who made their impress so deep that the world is compelled to remember them, had some such experience. John Huss in the forests of Bohemia, Jerome on the streets of Prague, are witnesses

of this; Savonarola, too, who died for his beloved Italy. The flames of his funeral pyre lighted up the sky so that the reformers who followed him saw where to set their feet. Martin Luther, the splendid reformer, who shook one-half the continent of Europe; John Wesley, the great revivalist of the last century, and hosts of others too numerous to mention, were all persecuted for righteousness' sake; and they might afford to rejoice and be glad, for their names are now enrolled among the immortal ones of earth.

The cross and the crown are directly related to each other. Then, when you suffer for righteousness' sake, do not murmur and complain, but rejoice in that this distinguished mark of honor is placed upon you, and that you are enrolled in the company of them who are accounted worthy to suffer for His sake.

When in the development of our religious experience we have reached this stage, the Savior says, "Ye are the salt of the earth." By the earth here is meant the people, and the proposition is that the Church is the power to save the people. As salt is applied to substances which tend towards putrefaction and decay, so the Church is to apply itself to the world to prevent moral putrefaction and decay.

If the salt has lost its savor, wherewith shall it (the world) be salted? It (the salt) is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. Surely the world needs saving. The truth of the doctrine of human depravity is evident to those who read the morning papers. Read the story of crime, burglary, murder, theft, robbery, and uncleanness of every description. The fathers were right when they taught the doctrine of human depravity. Weeds grow without cultivation, but the useful grains and vegetables and fruits and flowers are brought forth only by toil and care. A boy learns profanity more easily than he learns the catechism. Because human nature is depraved, jails are built and churches are erected. Both grow out of the same facts. Policemen are employed and preachers are preaching for the same result. Human nature is bad. The policeman tries to club men into virtue, and the preacher tries "to allure to brighter worlds and to lead the way." Congress meets and the General Conference assembles, both for the same reason. Human nature is bad. In spite of jail and church, policemen and preacher, Congress and Conference, we have to use time-locks on our safes; there is a market for handcuffs; man must give a bond if he handles trust funds, and a young man

could not secure employment on the street-cars as collector of fares without giving bonds and ringing a bell as an evidence that he has another five cents for which he must account. Human nature must be very bad when it is as bad as it is, notwithstanding all that is being done by State and Church to help it to be good.

“If the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?” If the Church can not save the world it can not be saved, for there is no other agency trying to save it. Nearly all useful agencies that are at work are rooted either directly or indirectly in the Church, and the Church, with all its faults, is the best thing on God’s earth. The fairest flowers that have ever bloomed on the stalk of our humanity have been rooted in the Church.

Let us now glance at some of the agencies the Church is employing to save the world.

First, the most important and greatest of all is the preaching of the gospel. Thousands of learned men every Sunday stand in the pulpits of this great land, in city, town, and village, and quiet country church, discoursing on the greatest themes that ever engaged the attention of mortals. Sermons on such subjects as God, life, death, duty, destiny, judgment, heaven and hell, bring a moral and in-

tellectual quickening to the people that could come from no other source. Millions of people every Sabbath-day listen to educated men trying to find a definition of those great words in life's large dictionary.

Next in importance to preaching is the singing cultivated in Christian Churches. The Church is the singing-school for the world. Infidelity has not distinguished itself either by writing great poems or composing great pieces of music. Poetry and music, those twin daughters of the skies, are not born in an atmosphere of doubt, of negation, and denial, but in the warmth of a Christian faith. While the Church continues to sing and teach the people to sing, "O God, our Help in ages past," "From every stormy wind that blows," "All hail the power of Jesus' name," "Come, Thou Fount of every blessing," "Rock of Ages, cleft for me," and "Jesus, Lover of my soul," it will be sending forth influences that are elevating and saving and sanctifying, and the world will feel the moral uplift.

Sunday-school and Epworth League, prayer-meeting and love-feast, class-meeting and revival service,—all these, with the sacraments and pastoral service, are the world's hope. It is a sure and certain hope. Thus the salt is applied and does its saving work.

V.

IN REMEMBRANCE.

"This do in remembrance of Me."—I COR. XI, 24.

THERE are two words in somewhat common use in the Christian Church to-day that are not Scriptural words, but ecclesiastical terms. These are the words "Trinity" and "Sacrament."

That there is a threefold distinction of some kind in the Godhead, Jesus clearly taught when He gave the command to go and baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, but the word Trinity has misled many people. It is not accurately defined, nor can it be. The essential truth that it sheds forth would remain if the word should drop out of use.

So it is with the word sacrament. It has misled many honest people, and its meaning is not clear to all of those who use the term. The sixteenth Article of Religion says, "There are two sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel; that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord." The es-

sential things for which the word sacrament stands would be retained if the word were no longer used. For convenience we use it in this discourse.

My experience as a pastor has led me to believe that very many good people are thrown into a state of mental unrest when the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is administered. They hesitate to approach the Lord's table, feeling that they are not worthy, and they quote for themselves, or remember the quotation found in Corinthians, "Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord," and thus they are deterred from approaching the Lord's table. I have known them to absent themselves, and then feel condemned in their own minds, fearing that they had neglected a duty. It is a great pity that we are so much under the shadow of the Dark Ages even at this distant day. To good Christian people, otherwise well informed, who fail to understand the simplicity and beauty of this service, it is our purpose at this time to try to make clear and plain what the sacrament of the Lord's Supper means. Our Article of Religion already referred to says there are but two sacraments. This is absolutely correct, and the meaning of each is distinct.

Baptism is the sacrament of the Holy Spirit,

whether administered to the babe or to the adult, kneeling at the altar or immersed in the waters of the river. Baptism always means the same thing. It means that one thing, absolutely nothing else. It is the index finger of the Church pointing to the Holy Spirit. As water applied to the body cleanses, so this ceremonial application of water typifies the cleansing of the soul by the power of the Holy Spirit. All the watery ablutions of the olden time were God's object lessons to teach the people this simple truth. They pointed to the coming of the Holy Spirit, and when that Spirit came in its fullness on the Day of Pentecost, the watery ablutions of the olden time passed away without any formal act of repeal. They had served their purpose, and when that purpose was served they ceased to exist. In the place of the watery ablutions of the olden time pointing to the coming of the Holy Spirit, we have the waters of baptism pointing to the fact that the Holy Spirit has come, and is the efficient agent in cleansing the soul from the pollution of sin. Baptism never points to the Father, nor to the Son, nor to the Church, nor to yourself, but always and only to the Holy Spirit. Its meaning is single, simple, and clear.

The dying child does not need baptism. It is

the child that is to live and enter into the conflict with the world, the flesh, and the devil, that needs baptism. While I would, as a minister, put forth any reasonable effort to baptize a dying child at the mother's request, I would act simply because of my respect for the mother, and not at all because I felt that the child was in any danger if it should die without baptism. I would trust the God who gave that baby life to care for it in this world or another.

The dying man does not need the Lord's Supper. I would, as a minister in the Church, hasten to his bedside to give him the Holy Communion if he desired it, for the sake of his own peace of mind or that of his friends, not for a moment supposing that it would affect his destiny. The sacraments are for the living rather than for the dying. The man who must face the world, the flesh, and the devil is the man who needs the sacrament.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is the sacrament of Jesus Christ. It never points to the Father, nor to the Holy Spirit, nor to the Church, nor to other communicants, nor to yourself, but simply and only to Jesus Christ. It is the index finger of the Church pointing to Him and to Him only. Its meaning is perfectly simple, single, and clear.

The bloody sacrifices of the olden time all pointed

to the coming of the Savior. We may not understand the philosophy of vicarious suffering, but it is a tremendous fact. It is in life—in all life.

The philosophy of "the survival of the fittest" is the philosophy of the jungle. The law of human progress is that the good shall suffer for the bad, the best shall die for the worst. The bloody sacrifices of the olden time told this truth. They were God's object lessons to a people who were slow to learn, and who could learn in no other way. So when the priest stood with whetted knife beside the altar to take the life of the innocent lamb, let no shallow critic cry out in indignation that that was foolish and useless, and ask, How could that affect the government of God? It was not intended to affect His government. It was intended to affect the priest who offered the sacrifice and the people who witnessed it. It said to them silently, yet eloquently, "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission," and this is the law of all progress in the world. Your mother suffered for you in the hour of your birth, and she has been suffering for you ever since; and the worse man you are, the more she suffers. The best and bravest men we have, followed the Starry Flag forty years ago to die in defense of the Union. Many a brave and good man

went to his death on Southern battlefields, that slaves might be emancipated. Many of the best boys we had followed their country's flag to the heights of San Juan to liberate the patriots there, who scarcely appreciated the service rendered.

The philanthropist may rise to that plane of Christian living where he delights in the service which he renders, though at every step he is laying down his life for others. And thus we follow this line on out to the place where angels dimly gaze and scarcely see, and we behold the Son of God Himself approaching "Gethsemane and its dread blast of agony;" Calvary, with its rude cross on which He died; and as we see Him laying down His life for the world, we see the working out of that law of human progress that is written everywhere.

He did not want to be forgotten. We do not wish to be forgotten. We like to think that we shall be remembered. When the boy cuts his initials in the bark of a tree, he is expressing the longing for immortality. When the adventurer climbs the mountain steep and leaves a mark to show how far up he has traveled, he is hinting at the common thirst for immortality.

When the shadow of the cross fell upon Jesus He gathered those about Him who believed in Him

and said, "When I am gone, do this in remembrance of Me." It was not the command of law. It was something more binding than that. It was the request of love. If my dying mother made a request, it would have more force with me than to find that same request, in the form of a command, on the statute books. The request of dying love is more binding than the command of statute law.

This service, then, is a monument to the memory of Jesus Christ. No more, no less. Grateful Americans once erected the tallest monument on the earth in memory of George Washington. It stands on the banks of the Potomac. It was done in remembrance of the hero of Valley Forge, the commander of the Continental army, and the first President of the United States—the Father of our Country.

Grant sleeps in a magnificent tomb on the banks of the noble Hudson. That tomb, seen from afar, says in its silent majesty, "It will not be safe to rebel against this Republic." That monument was erected in memory of him who stamped the life out of the Confederacy.

In public parks we see statues to the memory of warriors and statesmen and poets and scholars and inventors and other illustrious men.

Yonder in Trafalgar Square is a monument to the memory of Lord Nelson; and in Westminster Abbey, as you walk about in that magnificent building, the names of England's mighty dead are on the marble slabs beneath your feet and on mural tablets all about you. "We lay our mighty dead to rest with laurel on their cold brows," and then build monuments to their memory. And we do well. It increases our patriotism to cherish the memory of those who served our country and served it faithfully. When I see monuments to the memory of the Union dead, men who died on bloody battlefields that the nation might live, my patriotism has a new birth, and I think gratefully of the men who went from the battlefield to where "the robe of glory is given for the faded coat of blue."

But where is the monument to the memory of Jesus Christ? Lincoln's monument belongs on American soil. Wellington's monument belongs on British soil. Jesus Christ was too large for one nation. If any country should claim the right to have His monument, it would be Palestine, that little nation yonder not far from the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea; for it is the glory of the Jewish people to have given to the world its Savior. He is the "Glory of Israel." But we feel instinct-

ively that He does not belong to Palestine, to America, or to Britain, but to the world. So if we should build a material monument to His memory, we would need one on every mountain-side and one in every verdant vale, one in every park and every flower-garden, one in every quiet town and country neighborhood.

Jesus was wiser than this. He asked no such monument, but said, "When I am gone, do this in remembrance of Me." "Let those who believe in Me gather, and eat a little bread which is nourishment, and drink a little wine which is inspiration. My gospel is both." Thus the sacrament is a living monument, and it grows wider and wider at its base and higher and higher as the centuries sweep over it.

We do this in remembrance of *Him*, not simply of His birth, His baptism, His life, His teachings, His death, His resurrection, or even His ascension. "Do this in remembrance of Me."

When we partake of the Holy Communion, we are not saying anything about ourselves; we are saying, "Let the name of Jesus be kept in the hearts and memories of the people forever." There is, strictly speaking, no such thing as "open communion" and "close communion." It is the discus-

sion of a false issue. We do not commune with each other. We do this in remembrance of Him, whether there be one communicant or a thousand. We do not say when we approach the Lord's table that we are worthy; we say, "Let His name be remembered forever." When we absent ourselves from the Lord's table we intend to say, "I am not worthy of the privilege," but we really do say, "Let Him be forgotten."

Who should partake of this sacrament? First, all the baptized children should be welcomed to the table of the Lord. The logic that would exclude them from the Lord's Supper would exclude them from baptism. Let our children, from their earliest recollection, become familiar with our highest and holiest things. Let father and mother and children come together and kneel at the chancel. The little ones will, with wondering eyes, look on, and will not comprehend the meaning of the service, it is true, but later on they will learn its meaning, and by and by, when the grass grows green or the daisies bloom over the dust of parents, and the storms of life beat heavily upon these children then grown to manhood and womanhood, one of the anchors that will hold them true to God and the Church will be the memory of those Sabbath mornings in the long ago when they knelt with their parents at the chancel and partook of the Lord's Supper. Then let the children be welcomed to the Lord's table.

Penitents should partake of it. The limitations

that some men put upon it are unwarranted by Scripture or the teachings of our most excellent book of Discipline. The language of the invitation is not, "All you who are in good standing in some evangelical Church," but it is, "Wherefore ye that do truly and earnestly repent of your sins and are in love and charity with your neighbor, and intend to lead a new life."

This sacrament is not for perfect people, or it would be administered only in heaven. It is for imperfect people who are struggling toward a holy life, and it is observed, not to indicate that struggle, but to keep the name of Jesus fresh and green in the memories of men. To partake of the sacrament may be the first step in the new life of the penitent.

No doubt the words of Paul in First Corinthians, "Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord," have deterred many honest but mistaken people from approaching the Lord's table. This text, read in the light of the context, shows that the Corinthian Church was guilty of connecting the Lord's Supper with a drunken carousal, and Paul warned them that they were eating and drinking unworthily. The words were not spoken for honest but timid disciples, who really hesitated on conscientious grounds; for such souls he would have other words—words of invitation and encouragement and exhortation.

What would be thought of the children and

grandchildren who, when invited to the old homestead for the Thanksgiving dinner, would hesitate and say, "I would love to go, but I fear I am not worthy." They come, and come with gladness to the blessed family reunion, and rejoice in the privilege. So should Christians and penitent sinners returning to their Lord, and children who are being taught the way of life, gather around the Lord's table in remembrance of Him.

The Romanist teaches the doctrine of transubstantiation, which, if it has any meaning, means that the bread and wine are changed by the prayer of the clergy into the very body and blood of Jesus Christ. Luther taught the doctrine of consubstantiation, which means that the body and blood of Christ are present in a mystical sense. Both doctrines are self-evident absurdities.

The New Testament doctrine teaches that after the prayer of consecration the elements are still bread and wine, and that Jesus is present to our faith. For the sake of order in the Church of God, it is well that none should administer the sacrament but those who have been ordained to do so, but no Scriptural rule is violated if any Christian man should administer the sacrament. Let all things be done decently and in order, but there would be no violation of this excellent precept if any Christian should administer either sacrament in case of emergency. We retain a tinge of priestcraft in our practice. In the New Testament sense there is not a

priest on earth except as all believers are priests. Jesus has no successor in the priestly office. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood."

When Jesus died on the cross Aaron and his sons retired from the sanctuary—their work was done. We have now apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, but no priests.

When the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is administered in the congregation it should be made a great occasion, and all the people should be taught to regard it as at once a duty—a binding duty—and a sacred privilege.

While some Churches have attached too great importance to this service, I fear that our great Church in many places has fallen into the opposite extreme. We should not forget the request of our departing Lord, "Do this in remembrance of Me."

"When to the cross I turn mine eyes,
And rest on Calvary,
O Lamb of God, my Sacrifice,
I must remember Thee!

Remember Thee, and all Thy pains,
And all Thy love to me;
Yea, while a breath, a pulse remains,
Will I remember Thee!

And when these failing lips grow dumb,
And mind and memory flee,
When Thou shalt in Thy kingdom come,
Jesus, remember me!"

VI.

THE ERRING BROTHER.

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself lest thou also be tempted."—GAL. VI, 1.

THE division of the books of the Bible into chapters and verses was very well, but not perfectly done. This verse seems to me to be directly related to the closing verse of the preceding chapter.

The works of the flesh are given in the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first verses of the fifth chapter. "Now, the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

And the fruits of the Spirit are named in the

twenty-second and twenty-third verses. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

The works of the flesh and fruits of the spirit are not so much alike that any intelligent man needs to be in serious doubt as to which works or fruits are being brought forth in his life. "By their fruits shall ye know them," and by our fruits we shall know ourselves. The bad man brings forth in his life naturally these fruits or works of the flesh. The good man brings forth in his life these fruits of the Spirit. It is not to be supposed that every unrenewed man brings forth all these works, but he that offendeth in one point is guilty of all. That is, the man whose disposition leads him to break one commandment would under other circumstances break any other commandment. He who would pluck fruit from a tree after being forbidden has in him all the elements of a full-grown demon. He is a demon in embryo, and it requires only the opportunity, and he would not hesitate to break any commandment or all commandments. If he had power he would overthrow the government of God and introduce anarchy into the universe.

The wickedness that is in a bad man's heart may

show itself to the world now in one form of wrongdoing, and then in another. It may vary according to circumstances; and one or more of these works of the flesh may be more clearly seen in his wicked life than the others, but the possibility of each and every one is in the unrenewed heart.

The good man has in his heart the possibility of bringing forth any and all of these fruits of the Spirit. They will not all be produced in like abundance. There may be times when all the grace he has will be needed to produce one of these fruits, and the others may seem to be lacking. But in some goodly degree these fruits are seen in every Christian life.

The thought of the apostle in the text seems to be that it is a long distance from the place where the man brings forth spontaneously the works of the flesh up to that place where he brings forth spontaneously the fruits of the Spirit, and in making the transition there may be many a slip and fall. In other words, Christian life in the world is a struggle from the low level where these works of the flesh abound, up to the high level where are brought forth the fruits of the Spirit. Imperfection is liable to mark every life. There is constant danger of our

being overtaken in a fault. We are not to look for perfection here.

A school is a place where the uneducated come to receive an education. What would be thought of a school that appointed a Committee to stand at the door and refuse admission to all who are not classically educated. The applicant would say: "I know I am not educated. For that reason I am here. I came to receive an education."

A hospital is a place where the sick and suffering are relieved, where unhealthy and diseased persons are treated with skill and care, in order, if possible, to restore health. What would be thought of the management of a hospital if they placed a committee of physicians at the door, and none were allowed admission only those to whom a certificate of perfect health could be given?

The Church is a place where the ignorant are being taught. It is God's great school for the development of Christian character. It is God's great hospital where the sin-sick shall be restored to health, and we will allow no committee to stand at the door and exclude any applicants who have "a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins."

Of course, it must be understood that those who make application for membership in the Church must give some substantial evidence that they have this desire.

The mission of the Church is to take such candidates for "glory, honor, and immortality," and patiently, lovingly, kindly train them, and teach them, and bear with their imperfections.

I think I have met a few perfect people, very few; and they did not seem to know it themselves. They were generally people advanced in life, where the fires of youthful ambition had largely burned out; people who had been sobered and steadied by the experience of the years and who had learned in the school of experience that life's true projection is on the horizon of eternity. They seemed to be strong without being coarse. They were firm without being obstinate. They were wise without being conceited. They were tender without being soft, and they were gentle without being silly, and they were cheerful without being foolish, and liberal without being careless.

The cold-hearted worldling stands aside and criticises the imperfections of the members of the Church. My reply to him is: "This man that you criticise so severely, was many years out in the cold

world, associating with those who taught him evil, and only evil. He has been in our care only a few years, and we think he is doing very well considering the short time that he has been associated with the Church after his long association with such men as you."

I might perhaps invite the critic to walk down the street with me to a place where furniture is manufactured. I take him into the workshop, and show him a piece of furniture that is in the rough. It is just blocked out. It is just taking shape. Its form and shape tell you what it is to be. I suggest to him, "Purchase this article, and send it home as a present to your wife, to be set up in the parlor." His answer would be: "No; wait until it is finished." I say: "My friend, that member of the Church whom you criticised so severely the other day because of his faults and his failings and his imperfections, is not finished yet. Wait until he is finished. Wait a few years more until he has enjoyed the privileges of the sanctuary, Sabbath after Sabbath, has heard the sermons, joined in the hymns of praise, has partaken of the Holy Communion, attended the prayer-meeting, and every way joined in the exercises of the Christian Church in its worship and fellowship and service. Then some day God will call him

home, and if you are permitted to look into heaven and see him with his robe of righteousness, his palm of victory, and his crown of glory, you will say, 'O, here is the finished man; here is the character completed.' "

It ought to be noted again, that one fault becomes awfully visible in a good man's life, as one redeeming feature in a bad man's life attracts attention. The dark background in the life of a wicked man is such that it throws into prominence a single virtue. And the man whose life in the main is good and pure and true, who did in an evil hour yield to temptation,—that one mistake will overshadow, in the minds of the thoughtless and the critical, all the good deeds and kindly words of a life of many years.

Again, it ought to be borne in mind that life is more of a struggle with some men than with others. Here is a man who is well born, well educated. His environment has been good. Before him the sea is smooth and the gales are favorable. He is held in high esteem because no marked fault is seen in his record or his character.

There is another man not so well born, not so well educated, with unfavorable environment; the sea on which he is sailing is boisterous, and the

winds are against him. It is entirely supposable that, though greater faults may mark this man's record than that of the other man, he is the more virtuous of the two. God knows what a struggle it costs him every day to be as good as he is. He has more of a conflict each day than the other man ever dreamed of.

I remember one morning long ago attending a class-meeting in a Western Church to which I had just been appointed pastor. I was a stranger to most of the congregation, and, arriving early at the church, I went into a classroom. One man related his experience, and thanked God that he was enabled to pass all the saloons on the way from his home to the church without entering one of them. I thought at the time that was a very small matter, hardly worth mentioning; but afterwards, when I became acquainted with the man and knew the story of his life, and learned that for thirty years or more he had been a drunkard, and was now rejoicing in his new-found liberty in his recent emancipation from the awful habit, I understood better the meaning of his words in the class-meeting that morning.

While it might be no special triumph for you to pass by a saloon without entering, it was a great victory for this man. Circumstances differ.

I have read or heard somewhere of a man who was walking the aisle of a sleeping car at night with a crying baby in his arms. His hand was rough and his voice coarse and harsh, not like a mother's hand or voice, and he did not succeed in quieting the child. A voice was heard coming angrily from an upper berth, the voice of a man who was prevented from sleeping by the cries of the child. He said, "Where is that child's mother?" The poor man continued his efforts to quiet the child and made no reply. After a little time the question was repeated, "Where is that child's mother?" He said, his voice choked with emotion and unexpressed grief, "My friend, if you must know, this child's mother is in her casket in the baggage car." "O," said the traveler, from his upper berth, "is that the case? I shall come down and help you. I am sorry for you, poor man. I am sorry I spoke so rudely."

If we only knew the burden that the other man is carrying; if we only understood the sorrow that may be wringing his heart; if we only knew how unfavorably he was born, what he suffers from heredity because his grandfather was a sinner,—we would be more patient, and would be more ready to restore the one that is overtaken in a fault.

The Church has come down the ages with the

door on one side wide open towards the world, and in that door its ministers have stood crying: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, come buy wine and milk without money and without price." The Church has been shouting to the wicked that

"There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea,"

and they have been coming from all the walks in life, and they are welcomed on the one simple condition that they have "a desire to flee from the wrath to come and to be saved from their sins." And they are gradually being saved; and the door has been wide open on the other side towards heaven. The Church has been gradually saving her members and dismissing them from the militant ranks to the Church triumphant, which is without fault before the throne of God.

"Brethren, consider thyself lest thou also be tempted." A chain is no stronger than its weakest link. A character is no stronger than its weakest point. Satan can afford to wait year after year to find a vulnerable place, to find your weakest point. Let us consider ourselves lest we also be tempted.

The charity that we to-day exercise towards

others may be in demand for ourselves some day. Many a gallant ship has gone down in midocean. More than once a ship has almost reached the harbor, and then sunk beneath the waves. And there are perils all along the way in which we are traveling.

“Ne’er think the victory won,
Nor lay thine armor down;
The work of faith will not be done
Till thou obtain the crown.”

The context says, “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” This seems to be closely related to restoring the one who is overtaken in a fault. Thus we fulfill the law of Christ. Christ’s law was the new commandment that “Ye love one another even as I have loved you.” It was the measure of this commandment that was new—“As I have loved you.” So we should love.

Let us restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering ourselves lest we also be tempted.

VII.

ISAIAH'S VISION.

"Then said I, Here am I; send me."—ISA. VI, 8.

THESE eight verses of the sixth chapter of Isaiah give us the experience of a good man who became better, who received a great moral and spiritual uplift. We need not be particular as to the name of the blessing which he received. There has been too much done in the way of labeling blessings. The blessings of God's Spirit, and His grace in the process of salvation, are not like the goods on the shelves in a drug store that can each be labeled and marked. There are some things that do not readily submit to that process. We can scarcely state in words the weight of a great sorrow nor the amount of joy that we may feel. And the spiritual development of the soul could scarcely be measured by a tape-line, nor weighed out on the apothecary's scales, nor put into exact terms in language. It is enough to say that this good man became better, and the first step in the process was that he had a vision

of God. He says, "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up."

Let us withdraw our thought entirely from the idea of a material throne, and take the great truth that is shadowed forth to mind and heart by that figure.

A throne stands for authority, might, majesty, power; and the thought is, that God reigns. This is too often overlooked by men.

"He reigns in the vast and in the minute.
He gives its luster to an insect's wings
And wheels His throne upon the rolling worlds."

He rules in the affairs of worlds and nations and institutions and men and sparrows and lilies. His government is complete over angels and good men and bad men and demons, and the first step in the process by which any bad man shall become good or a good man better is to have this revelation of God made to him. His train filled the temple, and above it stood the seraphim, an order of spiritual beings concerning whose mode of life we have no very clear ideas; but we notice that each had six wings. One pair of wings indicated reverence, another obedience, and another humility. These three qualities are found in some degree in every good man. Prob-

ably they are not always evenly balanced. Some men have the spirit of obedience, and are sadly lacking in reverence. Others have the spirit of reverence, but are deficient in humility. It is supposable that a man shall have reverence and humility, and lack, perhaps, the spirit of obedience.

We should cultivate a spirit of humility, which means that we should think soberly of ourselves according as God has dealt to us the measure of faith; not to think too highly of ourselves, nor yet to think too little of ourselves, but to think soberly.

Reverence seems to be sadly lacking in this age of the world. It is that feeling which leads us to speak in whispers as we walk among the graves of the dead, to uncover our heads as we walk down the aisle of a church or stand in the holy place; that feeling of respect that we have for the occupant of the old arm-chair, whose hoary head is a crown of glory; that feeling that steals over the well-balanced mind as we think of God or take His name upon our lips. Reverence is something that needs to be taught in these days to the youth of America.

Great is humility, great is reverence, greatest of all is obedience. God has the right to command. It is ours to obey.

To obey is better than sacrifice. Even Jesus said, "I come to do thy will, O God."

"And one of these seraphim cried unto another, and said, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts." I would not base an argument on a mere allusion like this, standing alone; but I notice they use the word three times; not twice nor four times, but three times. I believe that the doctrine of the Trinity is alluded to in this threefold ascription of praise.

In the beginning God said, "Let us make man." Jesus, in giving the baptismal formula, said, "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." This truth is found in many parts of Holy Writ, and while I regret the use of the word Trinity because of some of its misleading tendencies, I most firmly believe in a threefold distinction of some kind in the Eternal Godhead.

It may not be scientifically proved, and our Scriptural arguments may be so awkwardly handled as only to drive away from us thoughtful people, but I have observed that the Churches that have power with men, and exercise a large influence in the world, all believe in it.

I have traveled much among poor people on the frontier. I have visited the miners in their cabins, the farmers in their country homes of the Far West, and, the lumbermen in their shanties, and have

preached the gospel to all these in schoolhouses, modest little village and country churches, in private houses, and in the open air. I have met representatives of all the evangelical Churches on these different fields of labor; but I have never met with the representative of a Church that denied the essential Divinity of Jesus Christ, who was there to preach the gospel to the poor and lowly.

There are such Churches of power and wealth and influence, and usefulness too, in the great cities; but my observation has led me to the conclusion that they all grow out of the reflex influence of the teachings of those Churches that believe in the doctrine of the Trinity.

There is a threefold distinction of some kind in the human mind.

When we were schoolboys our teachers told us to study the intellect, the sensibilities, the will. We never for a moment supposed that the mind was divided into three parts, or that we had three minds that made only one mind, or three parts of a mind that altogether made one mind, but that the mind, which is essentially a unit, is most intelligently studied when studied as intellect, sensibilities, and will. So the Godhead, which is essentially a unit—there is but one God; there can be but one absolute,

one infinite—is most intelligently studied when studied as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

They cried, “The whole earth is full of His glory.” Inanimate matter feels the touch and power of the Divine. It was God who piled the mountains high. It was God who hollowed out a place for the ocean, and poured in the waters. It is God who clothes the fields with beauty, and gives the rose its color. It is God who keeps the atom in being, and holds it in its place. “The whole earth is full of his glory.” “And the posts of the door moved.” Even this piece of inanimate matter recognized His presence and power.

Note the effect of this vision on the prophet. He said: “Woe is me! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.”

In the olden times people were not admitted to our Methodist love-feasts without a ticket, and the fathers were wise in making that arrangement. Now we welcome all to our love-feasts, and we are wise in having made the change. Society is changed. In the days of the fathers, unbelievers sometimes only came to mock and scoff. In these days the influence of the Church has extended far and wide, and those

who have any desire to come to love-feast, come from the best motives, and they are all welcome.

Have you not heard a blessed old woman in the love-feast, as tears coursed down her wrinkled cheek, crying out in unmistakable terms and in perfect sincerity of soul, "I am not worthy of a place in the Church of God." Her pastor knew she was worthy; the neighbors knew well that she was worthy. She had been an angel of mercy in a hundred homes of sickness. She had visited the poor, her life was devoted to husband and home and children, and she is worthy of a place in heaven, and will have it one of these days; when she "lays the throbbing dust aside, she will put the diadem of deathless glory on." And yet she says in perfect sincerity, "I am not worthy of a place in the Church of God."

Paul had been a faithful preacher of the Word for many years, and yet, remembering his former life, he cried out in self-abasement, "I am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God." True worth generally underestimates its own value, and real saintliness of character is liable to find expression in some such language as was used by Isaiah or Paul. It is one thing to be able to look the world in the eye and say, "Which

of you convinceth me of sin?" It is another to have a vision in the holy place where angels veil their faces before they pronounce Jehovah's name. A man is not likely to come out from a vision like this, boasting of his goodness.

The law of God interprets revenge as murder, and an unholy desire as a fearful crime.

That law requires truth in the inward parts, and this prophet had a revelation that helped him to grasp that truth as he heard and saw the seraphim.

Then one of the seraphim touched his lips with a live coal from off the altar. Thus there came to him the divine touch and the divine anointing.

The Lord always regards the man that is humble and of a contrite heart.

Then the glorious transformation occurred. Now he hears a voice that he might have heard before if he had been listening. God is always calling for men. We do not always hear His call. God was calling, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" before Isaiah heard His voice. The call was not issued for the first time at that moment. It had been sounding along the heavens long before; but Isaiah, under the touch of the divine, had his soul attuned to hear. He says, "I heard the voice."

That mother who kneels with a broken heart

beside the empty crib where once her baby lay, hears a voice that she might have heard before had she been listening.

That man who stands amid the ruins of his fortunes and hears a voice, hears only what he might have heard before if he had been in a proper state of mind.

Notice the changed attitude of the prophet. He does not stop to ask: "What is wanted? what is the salary? what are the honors? Is it a mission far from home, or is it some duty close by, which I have overlooked through all these years? Is the path difficult and dangerous, or is it pleasant and easy?" Without waiting to inquire at all as to any of these particulars, he said, "Here am I; send me."

Is this, indeed, the same man who a little while ago was crying, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." Is this the same man who now, when he hears that God wants a man, answers with confidence and unflinching courage without waiting to inquire as to particulars, "Here am I; send me?"

We notice that this man was sent on a very difficult errand. He was sent to preach to people who heard, but would not understand; people who would

not see with their eyes, nor hear with their ears, nor understand with their hearts. And if any man ever had a difficult task, it was the man sent to preach to such a people.

God's greatest servants are generally called to fill, not the easy, but the difficult places. The place of danger and of trial is the post of honor.

I heard of a father who was an officer in the Union Army, and whose son was a subaltern. He called his son; wrote out an order, and handed it to him, saying, "Deliver this to the general away down on the firing line." The young man placed the message under his belt, mounted his horse, and rode away. The enemy's bullets flew thick and fast while he made the dangerous ride. He drove the spurs into the flanks of his gallant steed, and went with iron nerve to deliver the message. The father stood and watched, and waited, and wondered, while that strange conflict raged in his soul that must take place where the father and the officer are one person, and the son and subaltern the other, and that son exposed to danger by the father's command.

At last the son rode back into his father's presence on his foam-covered steed, and dismounted. The father threw his arms about his boy's neck, and said, "My son, I did not want you killed, but I had

to send a man that I could trust." So God's bravest and best soldiers are in the hard places. It is comparatively easy to be the pastor of a wealthy and fashionable Church, with a large salary and great social advantages. Of course, such places have their own difficulties; but what are they compared with the trials and hardships and difficulties of the heroes away on the frontier and in our home mission fields in great cities? In such places are the heroes, and when the mists shall all have rolled from all the hills, and we shall see things as they are, it will be perfectly evident then, if it is not understood now, that the heroes and the heroines are often in obscure places.

I know not what God may ask you to do. It is for you to say when he calls, "Here am I; send me." Ask no questions. Be ready to obey your marching orders. You may be called to a distant foreign field, to spend your life amid the gloom of heathenism, dispelling a little of the darkness as you hold forth to the people the Word of Life.

It may be in some home field that you will be asked to toil in obscurity. It may be that God will ask no more of you than that you shall gather in some little children, otherwise untaught and uncared for, and teach them in the Sunday-school.

It may be that your duties will not be outside of your own home, where there may be the aged ones to comfort, where there may be sorrows to assauge, and work to do, and trials to be borne, and sufferings to be endured, of which the world will never know.

It may be to that young man in the gallery the first duty will appear to him to be to write a letter to his mother in the old home who prays for him every night before she sleeps; for in her heart and in her thought he is yet her baby boy.

It may be that you will have no other call than in your place of business, as a business man, by your integrity and honor and uprightness in the business world, to preach the gospel by exerting a religious influence among those with whom you are associated.

It is not for us to choose our field of labor. It is for us to listen for the voice of God, and, when he calls, to say, "Here am I; send me."

"Do not, then, stand idly waiting
For some greater work to do;
Fortune is a fickle goddess—
She may never come to you.
Go and toil in any vineyard,
Do not fear to do or dare;
If you want a field to labor
You can find it anywhere."

VIII.

THE WORD.

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.—PSA. CXIX, 105.

THIS remarkable Psalm, consisting of one hundred and seventy-six verses, is divided into twenty-two parts of eight verses each.

The characters which mark the division are the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and every verse in that particular section or division begins with that letter.

In nearly every verse one of the following words—law, testimonies, precepts, statutes, commandments, judgments, word, or some such term—is used.

I desire to lead your thought in a glance at the Book we learned to love in childhood; the Book which contains the law, testimonies, precepts, statutes, commandments, judgments, word; the Book that, somehow, in some way, has held its place in

our thoughts and affections through all the passing years.

I shall not argue any question of inspiration.

The word inspiration does not readily submit to a definition. I question if it can be defined. Certainly, after all our attempts to define the term, there is much discussion as to the exact meaning of the word. If words are true, they could not be made more so by inspiration; and if they are not true, inspiration would be impossible. The range of this discussion shall be within the reach of plain people, people who work hard for daily bread, and have not access to great libraries, nor time for protracted study.

We note first that the Bible is not a book, but a collection of books, sixty-six in number, written by forty different authors, the writers being in different places and representing a great variety of conditions in life. By luck or chance, or fate or fortune, or Providence or God, these books have been collected and bound in one volume, and constitute the Book which has well been called the "staff of hoary age and the guide of early youth."

If forty men were to meet in this city to-morrow, men of equal intelligence, and were asked to write an essay on any great subject now before the Amer-

ican people, or to give a history of any recent great event, we have no hope that they would rise from their work in such substantial accord as we find among the writers of this Book.

Note the different circumstances of the respective authors and the different times at which they wrote.

A great legislator steps aside to tell the story of the first constitutional government given to a people and the story of the first great emancipation, and gives us at the same time a code of laws called the Ten Commandments, on the teachings of which modern civilization is based.

A king lays aside his crown to make his contribution.

Teachers of old, originally called prophets, with a great variety of gifts and amid totally dissimilar surroundings, have contributed their quota towards the volume. The fisher folk of Galilee furnish a few of the authors. They walked with the great Teacher, and, having listened to His words for a few months, wrote their recollections of what He said and did.

The tentmaker of Tarsus, the scholar of Gamaliel, contributed several books.

The preachers in the apostolic age wrote letters to their Churches, and these became a part of the

sacred volume. The authors coming from these and other walks of life, each leaves his individual impress on the sacred page.

These writers did not live contemporaneously. Several centuries rolled past between the time when the author of the Pentateuch wrote, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and the day when the author of Revelation wrote, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."

Again, the Bible is one of the most readable books in the world. Here are beautiful stories that mothers read for the delight and entertainment and instruction of children; stories of travel as thrilling as any in modern times; accounts of battles as stirring as that of Manila Bay; poetry that reaches the high-water mark as the shepherd king strikes his tuneful lyre; problems that tax the skill of the metaphysician, as Paul discourses on fate, foreknowledge, and free will; a matchless system of ethics contained in the words of Jesus; and such wonderful appeals to the imagination as are found in the Apocalyptic vision—are not found in other literature. Any feeling of the soul may be expressed in language taken from the Psalms.

The wonderful book called the Book of Proverbs will make a young man wise unto salvation in this

world and in the world to come. Beside this collection of wise sayings, the words of "Poor Richard" and Tupper's Philosophy sink into comparative insignificance. It would be well to read evening lessons from the Book of Proverbs in all our Churches very frequently.

The story of the Acts of the Apostles is more interesting than "Black Rock" or "Sky Pilot." The letters of John and James, and others called apostles, contain unparalleled wisdom.

This hasty glance is intended to arrest your attention and emphasize the simple thought that the volume furnishes interesting reading. It was evidently written for all classes.

I fear that, notwithstanding this fact, it is not very much read by the American people. In a great many Protestant Churches there is not a copy of the Bible to be found in the pews.

The Bible is the Christian's text-book; the church building is the Christian's schoolhouse; the congregation are the pupils; and the minister is the teacher. Surely our pews should be supplied with Bibles. The so-called liberal believer suspects that the old-fashioned orthodox believer in what he calls verbal inspiration, is seriously mistaken, and the old-fashioned believer in verbal inspiration hurls back

the charge upon the higher critic. We should refuse to allow our beliefs to be labeled thus. We should search for the truth, and the truth needs no label.

The beauties of nature need no description to those who behold them. Look at the towering mountain, and behold its grandeur. See the gorgeous sunset, and enjoy its splendor. Look out on the broad blue ocean, and think of its immensity. They need not be labeled; they can not be defined or explained. They speak to us as they are.

And so with the Book. We are impressed with its beauty, its strength, its attractiveness, and its helpfulness. Let the Book be read by the people; it will be its own best evidence.

Again, the Bible is a very disappointing Book. If we had our present intelligence upon all other subjects, and heard for the first time to-day that there is a Book which professes to be the voice of heaven speaking in the ear of earth the story of a revelation from God to man, I think we would be disappointed. The Book is not written as we would have written it. I think the wisest men now living, if they would undertake to write the Bible, would begin with the statement that God is, and

then give a list of His attributes ; then an essay or a discussion on each one of them ; then, possibly, the story of creation written out in full ; then a dogmatic statement of belief ; and then such a statement of the doctrine of atonement that there would be no room for discussion ; and so clear would be the truths concerning the great problems of eschatology that there would be no room for the discussion that is now heard on these great subjects. On every one of these points the Bible disappoints us in the manner in which it speaks.

It is nowhere stated in the Book that God is. The truth is assumed in the sublime declaration with which Genesis opens : "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Nowhere in the Book is a list of God's attributes given ; but His relation to men and nations is seen to be such that His omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence are made to appear. His goodness and His righteousness are seen on every page.

Again, instead of giving a full account of creation, the whole story of creation furnishes scarcely one page. And thus all through the Book, from Genesis to Revelation, truths of history and of biography are given, and from these the thoughtful man

deduces the principles that underlie God's government over men.

Another reason may be noted why the Book is in its present form, which is this: Men learn truth in the abstract through the concrete. No definition of faith is given except where we read, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen;" and no one claims this to be a definition of the faith that saves. Instead of a definition we are furnished a beautiful story, the story of Abraham. He was called on the plains of Mamre, and told to go to a distant country, and there God would make of him a great nation. He went. After a time it appeared to him, as he beheld the patriarchs around him offer their sons in sacrifice, that he ought to offer his son a sacrifice to his God, and as he and Isaac walked up the side of the mountain the lad said, "Father, here is wood and here is a knife; but where is the lamb for the sacrifice?" and with a breaking heart the father said, "The Lord will provide a lamb for the sacrifice to-day." But when the boy was laid upon the altar, and the father raised the knife to slay his son, the angel was heard shouting, "Abraham, stay thine hand!"

While Abraham was mistaken as to the manner of the sacrifice, his faith is clearly seen in that he

withheld not his only son. It is safe to assume that God never told any man in any age of the world to slay his son. Abraham knew that God wanted his son as a sacrifice,—he wants all our sons as sacrifices. Abraham had no other idea of a sacrifice only as the life should be taken, and the first time the silence was broken was when the angel shouted, “Stay thine hand! There is a ram down yonder caught by the horns in the thicket. If you must kill something, go and kill the ram.”

My country and my God wanted my son as a sacrifice one day when there was laid upon us, in the order of Divine providence, the responsibility of freeing the struggling patriots in Cuba. McKinley was in the White House, and called for volunteers. My son walked out of my humble home on Superior’s shore with his father’s blessing on his brave heart, his mother’s kiss on his manly cheek, and one of Uncle Sam’s guns on his broad shoulder. Away he went, to climb the heights of San Juan if need be, to strike for the freedom of the oppressed, and to aid in driving the last Spanish soldier off this hemisphere. I gave him cheerfully as a sacrifice to my country and my country’s God, but I gave him as a living sacrifice. God wants all our sons and all our daughters as a sacrifice. Abraham’s

mistake was in thinking it his duty to kill his son. Mistaken though he was, faith has no higher expression, no nobler embodiment, than we see in that aged man trudging up the hillside with a breaking heart as his son doomed to death walked beside him. He is called "the Father of the faithful."

You ask me what is faith? I answer, read the story of Abraham. His readiness to offer up his son Isaac has given him the title of "the Father of the faithful." "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Instead of a definition of faith we have the story of Abraham.

Another picture tells us what patience is. Instead of a definition we have the story of Job. His property destroyed, his sons slain, himself afflicted with a sore disease; his wife, instead of being to him a source of comfort and inspiration, saying to him, "Curse God and die," we hear him say: "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?" "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." And as he wails out in the darkness, or rather shouts in triumph, standing amid the ruins of his hearth and home, "Though He slay me, yet will

I trust in Him," kings might cast their crowns aside in his presence; he is one of the noblest characters this side of heaven. It is great to suffer and be strong.

Thus, instead of a definition of patience, we have a picture thrown upon the canvas, and all can read and know what patience is, though we may not be able to furnish a definition. Patience is the greatest thing in the world.

Henry Drummond said, "Love is the greatest thing in the world," and thought he was quoting Paul. Paul said love is greater than faith and hope. He did not say love is the greatest thing in the world. The apostle says, "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." His idea seems to be that if we have patience it is certain that we have all the other graces. Patience is greater than love, for we can love some people when we can not have patience with them.

What is patience? Read the story of Job.

We glance hastily now at some other pictures. Here is the story of Jonah. How often has the shallow-brained critic or the loafer in the corner grocery spoken flippantly about Jonah and the whale! We need not discuss whether this be history or fiction.

Jonah was told to go to Nineveh. Instead of going to Nineveh he reported at Joppa, and trouble followed. Here is a truth of universal application. When any prophet of God has business in one town and he deliberately goes to another, he will not escape the consequences of his disobedience.

Look at another picture,—the three Hebrew children. We need not discuss the question whether this is history or fiction. The lesson is the same. The great truth taught by this incident is seen in this, when it was discovered that there were four men in the flames instead of three. One said, “Did we not cast three men in the flames? and, behold, I see a fourth; and the form of the fourth is like unto the Son of God.” The lesson of this incident is the same to us whether it be fiction or history. The form of the fourth like unto the Son of God will walk with us in the furnace. We are not left to ourselves, though we walk the burning tile on the plains of Dura.

The story of Daniel in the lions’ den is either history or fiction. In either case the lesson is the same.

A true man will obey his conscience and his God, and take the consequences, and God will deliver him. “Now, when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows be-

ing open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." The burning fiery furnaces and the lions' dens are not all in the past. They are in the world to-day, and they will be here in the days to come. Let us be brave and true to God, and the flame shall not consume us, and the lions will forget their thirst for blood.

We glance at one or two pictures in the New Testament. You have read the story of the man who went from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves. The Good Samaritan ministered to his necessities after the priest and Levite had passed him by. As we glance at that story we are not at a loss to know who is our neighbor. It is any human being whom you may comfort in the hour of sorrow, whose necessities you may relieve in the hour of need, whose burdens you may aid in carrying, or with whose tears you may mingle yours as they course down the cheek of grief.

The unity of the Book and the harmony of its different parts should be discussed, but time forbids. The Book as a whole speaks to us.

It appeals to us by virtue of what it is. As we read its sacred pages we feel that God is speaking

to us. The soldier lad on the field of battle, with the Bible his mother gave him in his pocket, climbs the bullet-swept hill with a firmer step. And when the minister goes to visit the sick and dying, however much he may love Browning or Shakespeare, or Whittier or Bryant, none of these is a substitute for the Book he carries with him to the chamber of death, and as he reads from the New Testament the sweet promises of grace,

“Comfort comes down the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last faltering accents whisper praise.”

“How precious is the Book divine,
By inspiration given!
Bright as a lamp its doctrines shine,
To guide our souls to heaven.

It sweetly cheers our drooping hearts,
In this dark vale of tears:
Life, light, and joy it still imparts,
And quells our rising fears.

This lamp, through all the tedious night
Of life, shall guide our way;
Till we behold the clearer light
Of an eternal day.

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